

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

September 22, 2005

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on September 22, 2005 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini, Authority Chairman, David Duffy, Commissioners Jerry Massa, Paul MacDonald and Jeffrey Hirsh.

Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, RICCA; Neil Schriever and Kristen McGrath, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon, Debbie Tuton and John McGinn, RICC; David DePetrillo, RI Division of Tourism; and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

Ms. Venturini, recognizing a quorum, called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

Ms. Venturini announced that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, October 20th at 12 noon.

Chairman Venturini sought a motion to approve the minutes of the

August meeting.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. MacDonald and seconded by Mr. Massa it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes as distributed.

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. McGinn to address the committee. Mr. McGinn (see attached presentation) reported that the Convention Center had signed contracts for several new events and repeat business. Mr. McGinn noted that Amgen is holding an all staff meeting in the building and the outlook is promising for future events and meetings. Tentative bookings include JUMP tap dance competition for April 06 and Staples Log, a Westin referral for May of 06. Mr. Duffy asked about the working relationship with the new owners of the Westin. Mr. McGinn stated that the new sales force has been working with the CVB and the Convention Center every bit as well as the former management team. Mr. McGinn reported that the PWCVB and the Convention Center are working together on the National Indian and Native American Employment and Training Conference, USENIX 2008 Annual Technical Conference and Phi Delta Kappa International. Mr. Schriever introduced Kristen McGrath, a new sales representative at the PWCVB. He stated that Kristen would be concentrating her efforts in the North East region. Mr. Massa asked Kristen why she left Boston to come to Providence. Ms. McGrath said that Providence is an exciting City with a great story to

tell. Mr. Schriever noted that Susan DeAngelis had taken a position with APC. The Committee welcomed Ms. McGrath and sent their best wishes to Ms. DeAngelis. Mr. Schriever announced that Gail Rubenstein would also be joining the CVB sales team. Ms. Rubenstein is well known in the industry, most recently for her work with Hasbro. Mr. Schriever reported that for the month of August the CVB sales team submitted 38 proposals. Some of the organizations that are considering Providence are the So. New England Model Railroad Club, the National Conference of Standards Laboratories, the National Association of Biology Teachers and the Association of Higher Ed and Disability. Mr. Schriever reported Convention Center bookings of M/C Communications, New England Fuel Institute and MF Athletic as well as other non Convention Center events. Mr. Schriever noted recent lost business and the reasons for choosing other venues. Mr. Schriever said that the PWCVB had attended the American Society of Association Executives, Affordable Meetings and the Student Youth Travel Association and upcoming travel includes a St. Louis Client Event and Chicago and Washing DC sales calls. Mr. Schriever also highlighted recent media activity. Mr. Schriever noted that 23 getaway packages are now being offered from member hotels on the CVB and RI Tourism web sites. He continued that event based packages including Providence Craft Show, Festival of Trees and the RI Spring Flower and Garden Show are being developed. Mr. Schriever reported that short term bookings are still the norm but there has been some movement towards meetings farther out.

Mr. McCarvill commented that the Providence Journal has been seeking information on the economic outlook for the Convention Center with more hotel rooms and meeting space coming on board and the Hartford Convention Center's impact. Andrea Stape has asked for information from the Convention Center Authority, the Convention Center and the CVB and we should all cooperate to provide accurate and useful information. Ms. Venturini stated that we have an unbelievable opportunity to attract new events to the City because of more hotel rooms and a renovated Dunkin' Donuts Center.

She said that we should be positive about our ability to fill the new rooms. Mr. Duffy inquired about Hartford. Mr. Schriever said that they have been cutting rates at both hotels and the convention center. He also noted that another competitor, Springfield, would be opening in two weeks. He said Springfield would be more competition for Hartford than Providence. Mr. Massa asked if some meetings and conventions would try Hartford and then return. Mr. Schriever said that it does happen.

RHODE ISLAND TOURISM DIVISION UPDATE

David DePetrillo presented a report from the Rhode Island Tourism Division. Mr. DePetrillo reported that The Jewels of the Bay web site on VisitRhodelsland.com has been extremely popular since its launch by the Governor on Bay Day. It has already surpassed 12,000 visits. The TRIP planner continues to draw thousands of visitors who plan their vacation on our web site. Web traffic to VisitRhodelsland has really picked up in September.

DOMESTIC LEISURE MARKETING

Mr. DePetrillo said that the Tourism Division had launched their fall domestic leisure marketing campaign with both print and online advertising. Since there is usually a much shorter planning period for fall vacationers, focus is on pushing inquiries directly into available packages. The print campaign will reach a readership of about 25 million. Mr. DePetrillo noted that the Tourism Division had purchased 700,000 impressions for our online campaign. The ads will lead directly to the packages that people can purchase.

DOMESTIC GROUP/PACKAGE MARKETING PROGRAM

The Rhode Island Tourism Division produced a group and package meeting planner with the support of the regional tourism organizations and the private sector. It was published through Rhode Island Monthly and mailed to a database of 3500 operators, travel planners and group leaders around the country, and will be used at trade events as well. Mr. DePetrillo stated that the Tourism Division will once again be launching a three page, four month co-op advertising campaign in Group Tour Magazine, supported completely by the regions and the industry, and branded Rhode Island. Mr. DePetrillo said that once again the Tourism Division is sponsoring the National Tour Association Marketplace. Every destination and every tour operator at this premier event will be wearing a badge with

the Rhode Island logo. The Division is also undertaking an effort to boost attendance at the New England League of Middle Schools conference. Rhode Island Tourism is sponsoring co-op opportunities for exhibit booth space, a Rhode Island reception with mini-trade show component; a mini “Tour Rhode Island” on Saturday for delegates (delegates will need to pay nominal fee to participate) and post-conference opportunities to visit Rhode Island attractions through “passport” program (passports must be picked up at Rhode Island booth in exhibit area). All of this activity will create added value at the conference and will help increase delegate registration.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Mr. DePetrillo said that recently a German TV crew was here for eight days. They were filming footage for a one hour special on Rhode Island that will be shown on Germany’s top travel program with an audience of 2.2 million. The show will then be syndicated to other German-speaking countries. Support from the regions and private sector to host the crew and assist with logistics was greatly appreciated. A huge article on sailing in Rhode Island appeared in Germany’s top sailing magazine. Mr. DePetrillo noted that if we were to purchase the same amount in advertising, it would have cost us approximately \$250,000 million dollars. Mr. DePetrillo reported that the International Program Manager, Jayne Panarello, is representing Rhode Island on a Discover New England sales mission to Ireland and the United Kingdom that begins in a few days.

DATABASE MARKETING

The Tourism Division is preparing an email blast to 45,000 people in our lead database that will be directly promoting fall vacation packages that have been organized by the regions.

PUBLICATIONS

The Tourism Division's new Fall Events calendar is now circulating around visitor's centers and hotels.

Mr. McCarvill noted that the CVB Contract is on a month to month basis. Ms. Venturini suggested that the marketing plan be placed on the agenda for presentation at the October Marketing Committee meeting.

Ms. Venturini thanked everyone for participating and entertained a motion to adjourn.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Duffy and seconded by Mr. Hirsh it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:20 P.M.